

VocalEase Bio  
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# The United States Army Field Band

The Musical Ambassadors of the Army  
*Washington, DC*

## VOCAL EASE

**VocalEase** is a seven-member vocal ensemble of the Soldiers' Chorus of The United States Army Field Band. Its repertoire features a diverse array of jazz, folksongs, and world music. Members of the ensemble bring a wealth of experience and talent to their unique performances and wide variety of clinics, which serve an important role in educational outreach programs of "The Musical Ambassadors of the Army."

**Staff Sergeant Jessica Israels, soprano**, calls Bellingham, Washington, home. She began her singing career at age ten with the San Francisco Opera Children's Chorus. Later performing opportunities included work with Voicestra and Bobby McFerrin. After her studies at Western Washington University, she continued her professional singing career in such varied productions as *Nunsense*, *Carmina Burana*, and *Die Fledermaus*. Prior to joining the Soldiers' Chorus in November 2000, SSG Israels directed a number of shows, including *An Evening of Jazz and Theater*, *Let the Good Times Roll*, and *1940's Radio Hour*.

**Staff Sergeant Laura Dause, soprano**, holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from Wheaton College Conservatory of Music in Wheaton, Illinois. Prior to joining the Soldiers' Chorus of The United States Army Field Band in 1998, she performed in dinner theatre productions in the Baltimore-Washington area. She also toured extensively throughout the United States and western Europe with the Continental Singers, a contemporary Christian ensemble. She currently studies voice with Mary Ruzicka of Timonium, Maryland.

**Staff Sergeant Sara Jones, alto**, is from Easton, Maryland. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Music from St. Mary's College of Maryland, where she majored in piano performance. After a year of freelance work and teaching, she earned a Master of Music in Vocal Accompanying from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. SSG Jones continues to perform as a pianist, but also sings alto in the Soldiers' Chorus.

**Sergeant Major Robert Barnett, tenor**, hails from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Applied Voice from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining the Soldiers' Chorus in 1977, SGM Barnett served two years in the Navy as a member of The United States Armed Forces Bicentennial Band and Chorus. In more than a quarter century of traveling with military choruses, he has performed at least eight times in all fifty states and has been a frequent soloist with the Soldiers' Chorus and Concert Band. He is a founding member of the barbershop quartet SoundOff! and the Non-commissioned Officer-in-Charge of the Soldiers' Chorus.

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## VocalEase Biography

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**Master Sergeant Carl Stephen Albritton, bass baritone**, grew up in Amarillo, Texas. He obtained his Bachelor of Music Education from Angelo State University, where he studied with Eldon Black. He taught in the Amarillo public school system while continuing his studies in vocal pedagogy at West Texas State University. Since joining The United States Army Field Band in 1983, MSG Albritton has soloed extensively and is currently the Bass Section Leader. In addition to his work in VocalEase, he is a founding member of the Soldiers' Chorus barbershop quartet, SoundOff!

**Sergeant First Class Victor Cenas, bass baritone**, is originally from Hammond, Louisiana, and attended Southeastern Louisiana University and Loyola University in New Orleans. While in New Orleans, he sang with renowned composer and conductor Moses Hogan. Prior to joining the Soldiers' Chorus in 1991, SFC Cenas was a member of The United States Army Soldier Show, traveling throughout Korea and the United States. He is regularly featured as a soloist with the Concert Band and Soldiers' Chorus.

**Sergeant First Class Robert Jefferson, baritone and director of VocalEase**, holds a Bachelor of Science from Grand Canyon University, a Master of Music from the University of Houston, and is currently a doctoral student at the University of Maryland. He taught music in the Houston Independent School District for three years and was a class piano instructor at the University of Houston. He has performed with the Houston Grand Opera and the Municipal Opera of Baltimore. A published author and composer, SFC Jefferson is a specialist in the performance of black gospel music.

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